

Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.

A natural consequence of the second and third beatitude is the consciousness that we are imperfect and have received God's mercy. So we are bound to be merciful to others.

Illus – Jesus parable of the unforgiving servant. Matt 18:23-35. Mercy consists of treating people better than they deserve from us. Forgiveness is a type of mercy. So is aiding someone whom we have no obligation to help, or forbearing to exploit someone's vulnerability. Mercy, in all these senses, is the driving force of Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection.

Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God.

The sixth beatitude echoes Psalm 24:3-5:

Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully. They will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from the God of their salvation.

Clean hands and pure hearts" denote integrity. Integrity goes well beyond avoiding deceit and bad behavior. The root of integrity is wholeness, meaning that our actions are not choices we put on or take off as may seem convenient, but stem from the whole of our being.

Sincere – wax on statue to hide fault of stone - - Sine cera
Latin –
Lack of sincerity – shallowness. Goodness only for show.

Blessed are the peace makers, for they will be called children of God.

Roman peace through violent domination of the earth. Pax romana. In a divided society reeling under strife between various classes, Jesus was talking about people who endeavor to bring reconciliation.

Not peace lovers, but peace makers

The reason why peace loving is different from peace making is that peace loving is just passive indifference or distancing from peace-disturbing factors. Whereas peace making requires a non-violent action and commitment to injustice.

Illus – mahatma Gandhi was a proponent of this sort of peace making through non-violent action, which he called satyagraha – desire for truth or holding on to truth.

He used it not only against British for freedom, but also to reform the caste-ridden Hindu society and to preserve peace between Hindus and Muslims at the time of the partition. Often it was an uphill atsk with more pain than gain. But it did miracles when it halted riots.

Movie Gandhi – Hindu man comes and confesses that he had killed many muslims. But one night he killed a hindu parents and a child and the shrieks of the child still resound in his ears. He cant sleep. He is living through hell. Gandhi said the way out of hell was to adopt a muslim orphan who had lost parents during the riots and bring the child up as a muslim.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake

A follow-on of the above beatitude. Peace would come only through justice. Peace imposed through injustice would form more tension. And those who work against injustice will be persecuted. God would be with you when you work for justice and peace. The second part of the beatitude goes on to say that those who are persecuted because of their faith in Jesus. Reflects the later growth of the Church during the time Matthew was writing the gospel. Christians were being persecuted for their faith. God was not unknowing of their sufferings. Jesus was worth suffering for and God would reward the faithful for all their hardships.